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page 19



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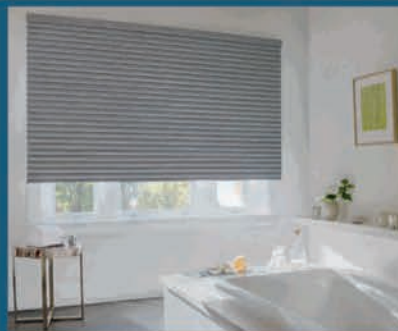
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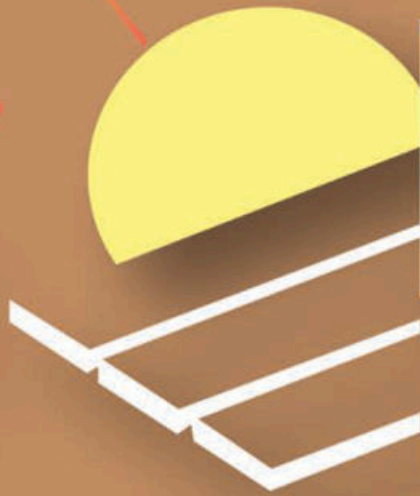
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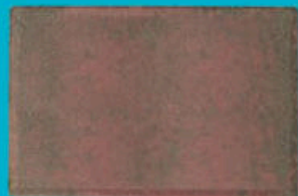
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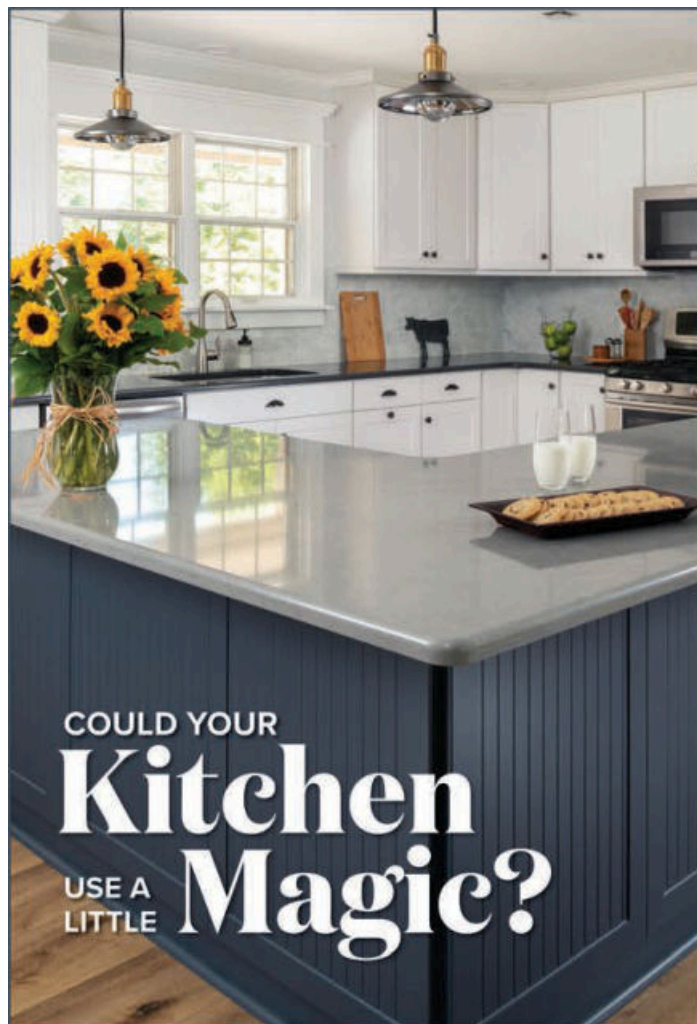


contents

- 12 Sweet Escape**
Professionals say there's no time to lose for creating your outdoor living space
- 16 Fall Showcase Special Advertising Section**
- 19 Ask the Expert**
Gehman Design Remodeling
- 22 Make Your Mark**
Area experts turn builder-grade houses into eye-catching customized homes
- 27 Ask the Expert**
Coast Tile & Marble Supply
- 31 Ask the Expert**
Your Home Concierge
- 33 Premier Partnership**
Global Home Improvement is pairing up with Infinity Windows and Doors from Marvin to bring their best products to your home
- 38 Remodeling Done Right**
Proper planning and guidance help transform kitchens and bathrooms and boost your return on investment
- 46 Generating Peace of Mind**
Colonial Generators helps homeowners and businesses eliminate the stress, inconvenience and cost associated with losing power
- 49 Pandemic Projects**
A few creative and memorable spaces created by local professionals during the pandemic
- 53 Shore Showcase Special Advertising Section**
- 58 Great Estates**
Gracious Host, Avalon, N.J.
- 62 Shore Resource Directory**

On the cover:

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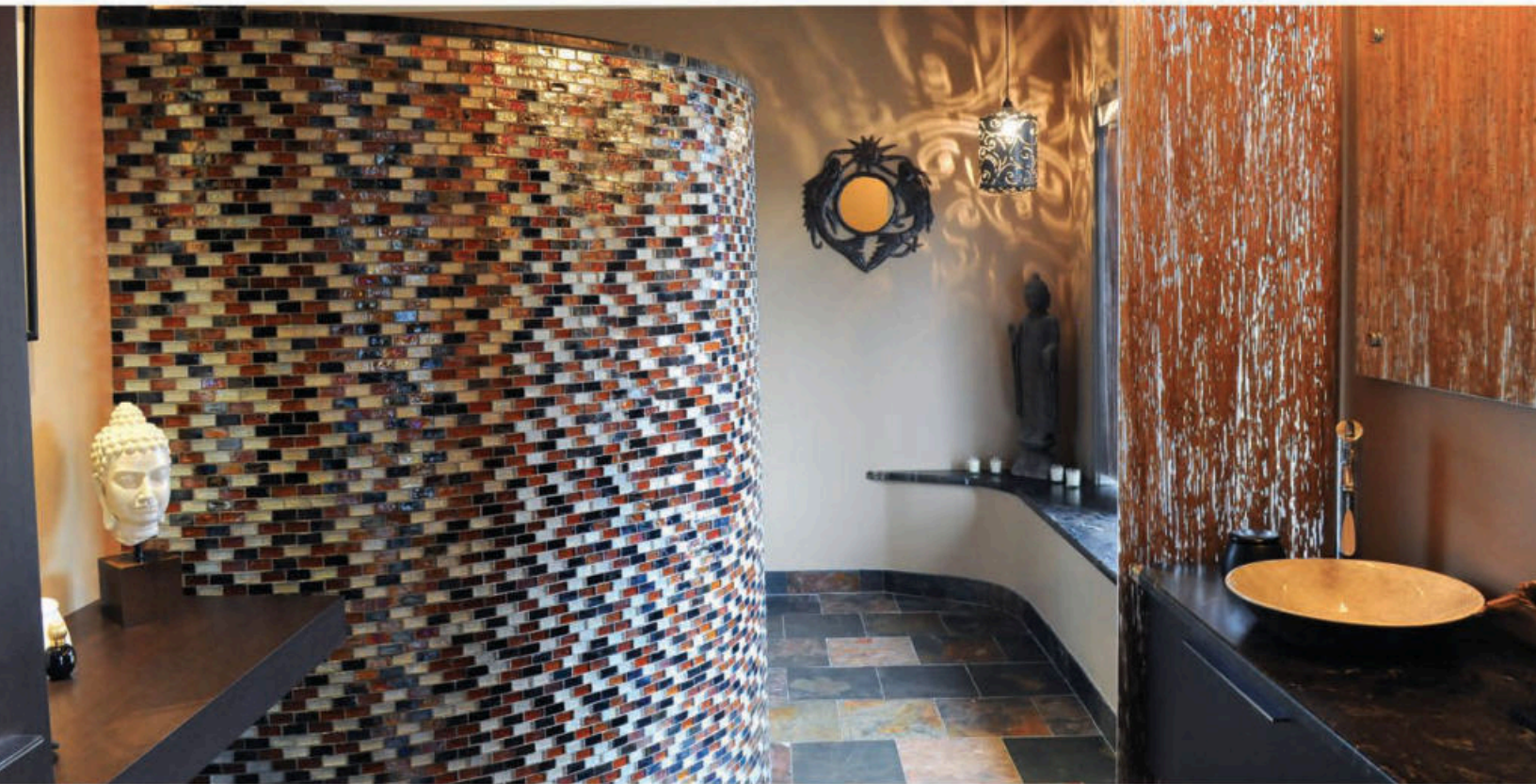
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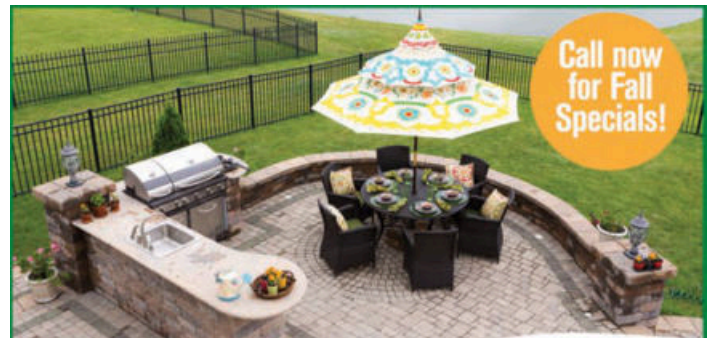
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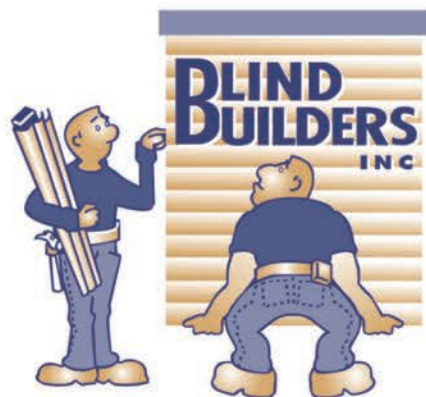
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Professionals say there's no time to lose for creating your outdoor living space.

by Liz Hunter

Sweet Escape

Perhaps more than any other space in a home, outdoor living areas were highly coveted during the pandemic. So much so that city dwellers sought out properties with expansive yards featuring a pool, patio or deck—or at least the space to build them. Professionals within the outdoor living industries say the pandemic will have a lasting impact on them.

Bobby Huber Jr., sales manager and buyer for Oskar Huber Furniture & Design, says, “The COVID effect and COVID economy is quite interesting and will without a doubt be studied in years to come in business classes around the world. The lifestyle changes made during the height of the pandemic are having a profound effect on the way we work, shop and live. The ‘post-COVID’ consumer has a strong desire to improve their living space both indoors and outdoors. The sharp rise in demand for indoor and outdoor furniture coupled with the new socially distanced factories, a strained supply chain and the trucking/logistics sector in disarray has created a never-before-seen product shortage and delay.”

House & Home spoke with local businesses that provide services in the outdoor living industry and asked what products and designs are trending, and what to expect for the coming year.

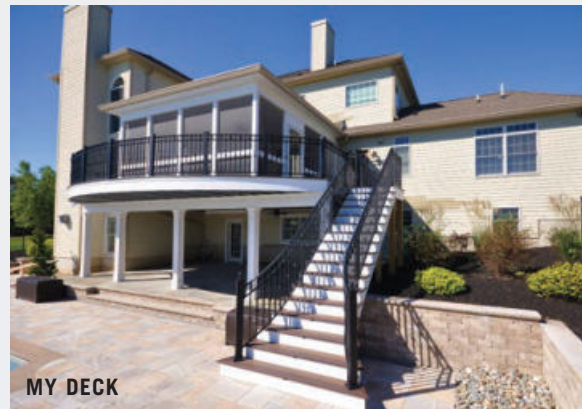
DECKS AND FENCES

The website Houzz reported that searches for deck-related design and construction jumped 178% from 2019 to 2020, further solidifying this must-have feature. Joe Kalnas, general manager of My Deck, has been in the industry for 25 years. Within that time, his materials of choice have

become steel framing, composite and PVC decking with aluminum railings. These give more flexibility in the design.

“Clients tend to think a deck can only be square or rectangle, we think outside the lines by incorporating curves, shapes and using steel framing, taking into account aesthetics as well as longevity,” Kalnas says. “Composite and PVC decking come with a warranty, why not have a similar warranty on your deck foundation using steel framing?”

To make the deck more interesting, Kalnas suggests adding a curve, fire feature, spa and a covered area for grilling and dining.



MY DECK

A railing is also a big factor in the aesthetic of a deck. “Cable, glass and custom aluminum railings all offer a different appearance. Railing color is also an integral part of accenting the overall appearance of a deck project,” he says.

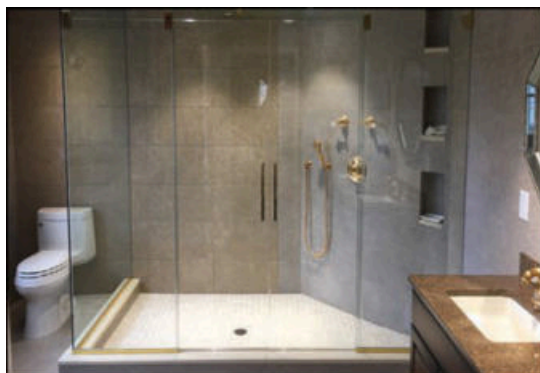
Something that is emerging in railings is known as a “cocktail rail,” which is a deck board mounted to the railing, providing a flat, even surface to set a drink down.

Kalnas advises homeowners to plan well ahead if a deck is a project on their wish list. “Most reputable deck builders are currently scheduling projects several months out, so if a deck is planned for next spring, act now. And make sure to use a licensed contractor that specializes in decks and outdoor living spaces.”

The fencing industry has also embraced the low-maintenance and durability of vinyl, says Dany Leslie, owner of Superior Fence & Railing. He’s been installing fences for over 20 years and founded his own business four years ago.

“Everybody wants vinyl fences and heavy duty rails,” he says. “We offer various styles that can bring out the aesthetics of your yard or basic styles that provide maximum privacy. We are happy to carry the Illusions brand as well, which offers the industry standard in vinyl composite and color spectrum fencing. All vinyl products are secured with a 20-year limited lifetime warranty to secure quality integrity.”

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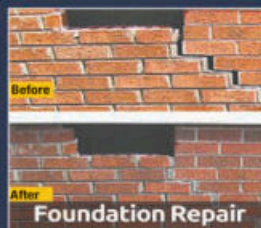
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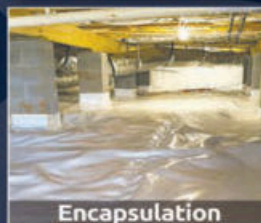
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Railings also come in a variety of options: aluminum, vinyl, wood; and styles such as Colonial spindle and black aluminum spindle.

Leslie recommends homeowners ensure they are getting a fair, honest price for their fence. "Make sure it's a professional, reputable company doing the installation and that the products are quality American-made."

HARDSCAPING

The stone elements in an outdoor space play so many roles, from the patio foundation to retaining walls and fire pits. One of the benefits of hardscaping is the ability to add on features to enhance what you currently have, says Jarrod Nyce, owner of Nyce Crete and Landis Block & Concrete.

It's up to the homeowner what they have in mind. "If they have a basic patio they might be looking to add a sitting area like a bench or a knee wall, maybe a fire pit. If they already have that, maybe they're looking to add an outdoor living space with a TV and a fireplace. All depends on what the customer really wants," he says.



NYCE CRETE AND
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In terms of stones trends, a more modern look has become popular in the past few years, Nyce says. "More square and rectangle shapes with smooth surfaces. Colors are all over the charts because everyone has their own favorite colors, but the combinations of very light and very dark colors seem to be very trendy.

"I personally buck the current trend, I prefer the more rustic or tumbled look. I like the look of more natural rounded edges and softer transitions. And I prefer lighter colors especially in areas of foot traffic because of the hot sun," he says.

As 2022 approaches (can you believe it?)

Nyce isn't quite ready to make any predictions on future trends. "It's a little early to tell yet as most new products come out in February. But I would say you'll continue to see more water features, fire features, audio and TV, and lighting ideas. The outdoor kitchen and cooking ideas are always fun as well. I'm sure there will be some surprises that will get a lot of people excited."

OUTDOOR FURNITURE

This area is viewed by many as the finishing touch to an outdoor space.

"Outdoor furniture and accessorizing are what really bring to life the outdoor space," says Huber. "Outdoor hardscaping is beautiful and the materials available can bring an outdoor space to life, but it is the furniture and accessories along with the plants, trees and flowers that really create the excitement. The outdoor furniture and accessories will let you put your personal stamp and style on that area. Between the fabrics you can select from, the styles and the modern materials, you can create an outdoor living space that is just as exciting and full of functionality as your indoor spaces."

It can be overwhelming to decide which pieces are going to achieve the right look—and how to know if they are worth the investment. This is where a skilled eye comes in handy.

"From the furniture side of things, having the guidance of a design professional to properly assist you with laying out your outdoor space to give you the optimal flow and functionality you are looking for is important," Huber says. "But our designers will also assist you in finding the right product that will meet your needs and stand the

test of time. Outdoor furniture needs to be built right using the proper materials to withstand Mother Nature. The last thing anyone wants to do is replace their outdoor furniture a year or two after buying it."

Not to mention, there are hundreds of different outdoor furniture manufacturers available to buy from in today's market, he continues. "What we have done at Oskar Huber is curate a good, better, best story—and our professional designers can explain to you the difference between our good and another retailer's best. As a family-owned business we pride ourselves on responsibly sourced, environmen-



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tally friendly home furnishings that will stand the test of time, are the quality we would want to put in our own homes and have the ability to be customized to our customers' needs all while being a value."

Huber does caution that he has never seen lead times on custom orders like this before. "It is crazy to think about next spring and summer when we [just] finished [summer 2021], but that is exactly what we are doing at Oskar Huber Furniture. We are also urging customers to not wait and to buy now—we will even store their new furniture if it arrives before they want it. If you wait until next March or April or May you might not be able to get the product you want in time to enjoy it for the outdoor season. ... I am seeing custom orders being confirmed with March 2022 ship dates. On average our outdoor vendors are shipping in 26 to 30 weeks."

Clearly there is no slowing of the demand for outdoor living spaces and homeowners should act now to bring their dreams to life by 2022. **H&H**



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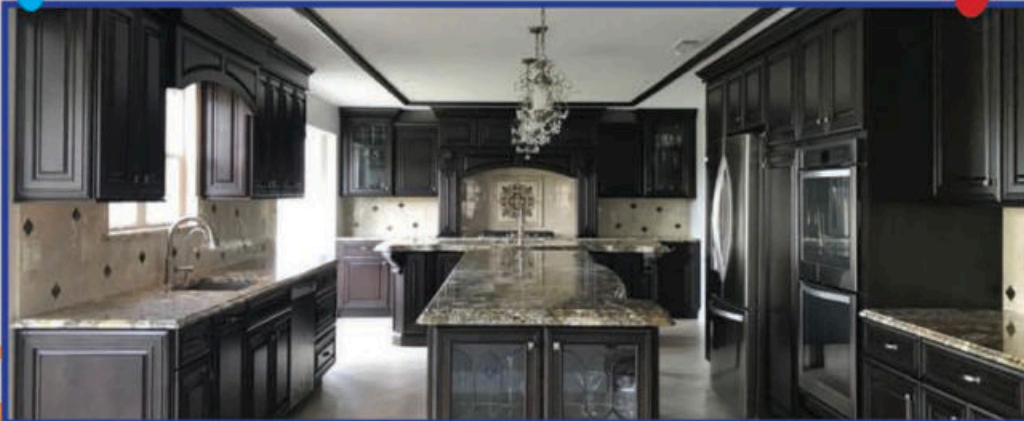
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ask the expert
by Matt Cosentino

Gehman Design Remodeling

MANY HOMEOWNERS CAN RELATE TO THE NEED TO HAVE UPDATED BATHROOMS, A BETTER LAYOUT IN THE KITCHEN OR PERHAPS ADDITIONAL LIVING SPACE FOR A GROWING FAMILY. Moving to a newer and bigger house is an option, but maybe they have grown to love the neighborhood or do not want to take their kids out of a top-notch school system. If that's the case, a whole-home renovation just might be the solution.

Of course, such a project is no small undertaking, and it is important to have a clear vision from the outset and an experienced team of designers and contractors who have come across all types of scenarios over the years and have the wherewithal to handle them. That's where Gehman Design Remodeling comes in, bringing the value of more than three decades in the design-build industry.

House & Home spoke to Dennis Gehman, MCR (Master Certified Remodeler), president of the company, to learn more about what a whole house renovation entails.



Dennis Gehman,
MCR, president

CAN HOMEOWNERS LIVE IN THE HOUSE DURING A WHOLE HOME RENOVATION OR IS IT BEST TO FIND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS WHILE THE WORK IS BEING DONE?

It depends. Most of the time, clients do remain living in the house. They won't have as much liv-

ing space and not having a kitchen is probably the hardest thing to deal with. We also need the rooms we're working in to be cleared of furniture most of the time. Sometimes it makes sense for people to get a Pod and have it sit outside or put things into the garage or basement. If we have to work around all of that stuff, it certainly takes longer and that turns into more money. From our end, it's nicer if they move out, but I understand financially why they don't because then they have to rent another place. It also depends on what stage of life they're in. If they have young children, living through the renovation is going to be harder to deal with than if they're empty nesters or the kids are old enough to understand.

CAN THE CLIENT SAVE MONEY BY DOING ONE BIG PROJECT RATHER THAN SMALLER MULTIPLE PROJECTS SPREAD OUT OVER TIME?

They probably do save money by having everything done at once, because there's certainly some efficiency since we're already there and we have our tools out. We would have to set up each time we come back if you break it up into various projects. Most

of the time material prices increase each year, so it's probably best to bite the bullet, because you don't know what it's going to be like in the future. Just as important of a question is the homeowner's quality of life. Is it better to get this over and done with rather than living through a remodel every few years?



BEFORE

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE A MASTER PLAN HEADING INTO THE RENOVATION?

A master plan makes sense because you want to plan things out so everything works together and you don't have to pay twice because you built something and in a future phase you're pulling it apart. From an energy efficiency standpoint, the house should work together as a whole system. We understand the importance of insulation, quality windows and doors, how the HVAC is installed, where the ductwork is run. It's best that the ductwork

is properly sealed and it's also best that it's inside conditioned space. Even having drywall properly installed increases energy efficiency of the house.

IS THERE AN ADVANTAGE TO WORKING ON SEVERAL AREAS AT THE SAME TIME, SUCH AS INSTALLING NEW WINDOWS AND EXTERIOR DOORS WHILE HAVING NEW SIDING INSTALLED?

Yes. There are times when people want new windows and doors and decide to let the siding go for a while, and that can be done. Obviously, people do that all the time. But the exterior of the house really goes together best and makes the home the most airtight and waterproof if you do the siding and the windows and doors at the same time.

CAN A PROJECT LIKE THIS GIVE THE CLIENT A NEW HOUSE WITHOUT CHANGING THEIR ADDRESS?

It sure can. There is a cost to moving. If you sell your house, you have to pay a commission to the realtor. Unless you're young and strong and have a lot of friends willing to help out, you're going to be paying a moving company. And nine times out of 10 when people move into a new house, within the first 24 months



they do a significant remodeling project anyway, because unless you're having a custom house built, it's probably not exactly what you want. So when you look at all of those factors, you should at least take into consideration a whole house remodel. It can be worthwhile. **H&H**



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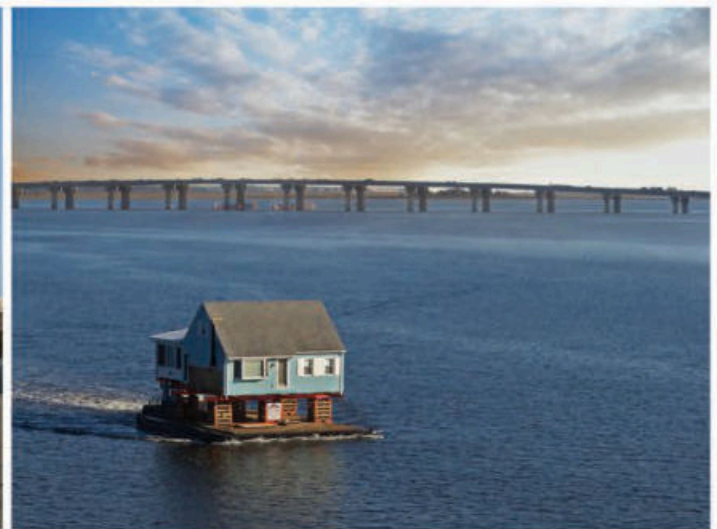


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Thanks to area experts, the sky's the limit when it comes to turning a builder-grade house into a customized home with just a few eye-catching, hand-selected options. *by Madeleine Maccar*

Whether you're fantasizing about your first home or you're downsizing after your last child moved out, every homeowner's journey begins with visions of their dream house.

But when reality steps in with limited inventory, necessary compromises and revised must-haves, oftentimes what begins with lofty, idealized visions of a domicile that's perfectly appointed right on down to its coordinated color schemes ends with a house that's got the right location in the right price range and is close enough to perfect.

Which isn't necessarily a bad thing—after all, it's the memories and milestones it holds that transform a house into a home. But almost every homeowner has a story about how they've come to hate their kitchen floor, how their tastes have turned a novel feature into an eyesore or how they've finally had enough of the bathroom they never really

liked in the first place.

The good news is that you don't need to relocate to get the house you want. In fact, area experts are primed to help update, renovate and even innovate your home inside and out with custom flourishes that get the builder-grade house you bought much closer to the home you've dreamt about.

Geoffrey Geibel, a retail segment manager with Pella Windows & Doors, has seen firsthand in jobs across the tri-state area how drastically a new front door or redone windows can revitalize a home.

"Most often, a lot of the way we can upgrade things for more street appeal comes down to color selection and the options—but that's not all," he explains. "When it comes to windows and front-entry doors, the possibilities are essentially endless. It comes down to the quality of the products your



design consultant has, and how well the installer understands all the different elements that can affect installation."

He's also noticed that not all clients come to construction professionals with a clear vision of what they want beyond just knowing they're ready for a change. An in-person showroom can be invaluable in not only arming a customer with the vocabulary they need to ask for what they want but also highlighting all the options available to them, as Pella's newly opened Customer Experience Center in Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania, is already proving.

"A consumer's vision is limited to what



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Make Your Mark

the full scope of the project to keep expectations in check. After all, she notes, “You’ve spent time and energy, not to mention budgeting, to bring your home improvement dreams to life. Put it in the hands of a pro, and you won’t be disappointed.”

Experts can help you walk the line between what’s the hottest current trend—like the black-framed windows Geibel says everyone’s asking for right now, which are well-suited to all kinds of personal tastes and home styles—and what’s most harmonious with and possible for your home’s structure and style.

But, in the end, it’s all about what best suits a homeowner’s lifestyle and will make the customer feel the best inside their home.

“Everyone is different when it comes to organizing and maximizing the space they have. Some homeowners want to be able to see everything when they enter or reach into their closet, and some want as many drawers as possible,” says Williams. “The one thing they all have in common is clothing organization: It’s the first area you see in the morning and it’s the last area you see at night. Once you have the closet organized, it starts your day on a positive note.”

“The customer needs to be comfortable: You don’t want drafts from your windows, you want to be able to lower your blinds when the light is streaming in, you want lower energy bills, and you want options that you’re going to want to look at every day for years to come,” Geibel notes. “It takes a lot to do a job like replacing your windows, and having options for every budget and being flexible is how we help our customers select what’s right for their specific needs and tastes.” **HCH**

they’ve seen or what they’ve been told is available,” Geibel says. “To walk through our experience center and see the actual features of the windows and all the options that can make their lives easier or meet their vision, it’s tremendous. I can’t say customers always walk into that store and walk out with the same idea, but they sure appreciate what we offer and how we go about doing it.”

The interior of a home, meanwhile, is where ABC Closets focuses its efforts. And according to Renee Brinn Williams, the company has done much more than what their name suggests.

“Overnight, basements, spare bedrooms and garages were turned into offices, classrooms, large pantries and gyms,” she notes. “For example, for those who want a small office space in their room but don’t have the square footage to spare, we have repurposed their closets to create a work-friendly nook. We’ve swapped out closets for craft spaces. Using a closet for a homeowner’s hobby room also helps to minimize clutter since it won’t be out in the open.”

The pandemic has had a profound effect on how people are overhauling their living spaces, inch by inch and room by room. The normalization of working from home has changed countless homeowners’ needs, while many more are simply ready for a refresh.

“Since the pandemic began, homeowners have been spending so much time at home organizing and decluttering, making customized organization more desired than ever,” says Williams. “Some of the top pandemic home improvement projects include walk-in and reach-in closets, pantries, home offices and garages.”

She adds that introducing some order to

one’s home has been a natural reaction to COVID’s unpredictable hold over normal life. “By renovating, you retain a home you have lived in for years that is full of memories. By organizing, there is less chaos, which can bring about a sense of calm and control.”

Geibel does advise those beginning their custom-design journeys to consult with not only a professional but also any homeowner association they may be beholden to.

“A lot is dictated by neighborhoods,” he points out. “In particular, when there’s a lot of historic homes in an area, we have products that allow those homeowners to replace their windows while preserving the look of their homes.”

Working with a professional is imperative, Williams agrees, as expert guidance will help stay within your budget and explain



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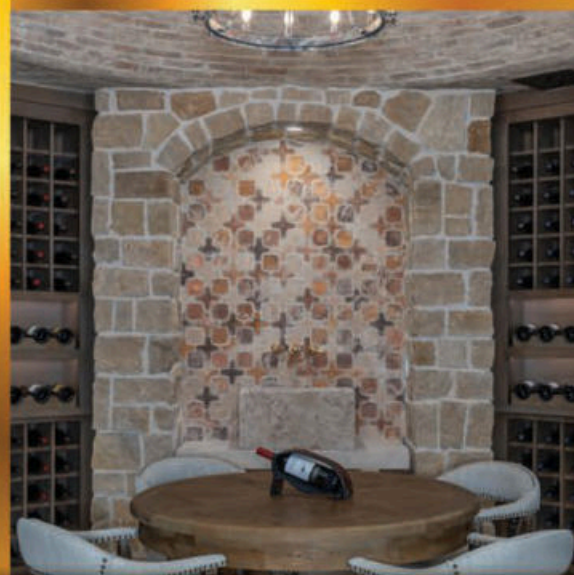
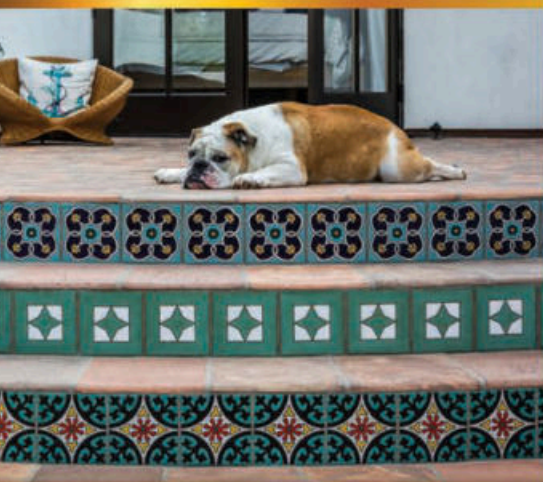
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NOW IN ITS THIRD GENERATION OF FAMILY OWNERSHIP, COAST TILE & MARBLE SUPPLY HAS UNMATCHED KNOWLEDGE FOR PROJECTS INVOLVING TILE AND STONE. THE COMPANY HAS BUILT ITS REPUTATION ON BEING A LOCAL SOURCE FOR HOMEOWNERS NO MATTER WHAT SIZE THE PROJECT. BUT BEFORE EMBARKING ON THE JOURNEY OF REMODELING, THE MATTER OF BUDGET MUST BE DISCUSSED.

"Typically, if homeowners do some research, they think they have an idea of a budget, but once they get into details and the little things involved, they may find the number is higher than anticipated," says Kyle Eisele, design consultant. "It's important to have a detailed budget with a contractor so you're not shocked by the selections. You don't want to pick something out and plan around it without knowing if it fits your budget."

Using their decades of experience, Coast Tile's design team helps clients maximize what they have. We spoke with Eisele about the creative ways to save money and where it's best spent.



Kyle Eisele
Design Consultant

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO APPROACH A TILE BUDGET?

It all depends on the scale of the project, but some contractors will tell homeowners to allow one sum number for tile. For instance, they might say for six bathrooms, a backsplash and laundry room, allow \$18,000. Others might say to budget \$7 per square foot for tile, and in that you also have to consider installation, finishing, grout, etc.

We've gotten very good at knowing the average square footage and allocating different products into that budget. We can find ways to make a \$2,500 bathroom look like a \$5,000 bathroom with certain techniques to maximize their budget.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE METHODS YOU USE TO CREATE IMPACT AND HELP CLIENTS STAY WITHIN BUDGET?

We have an entire showroom to discuss options. We have an area dedicated to intricate waterjet-cut tile, natural stones and glasses, that are going to be much higher in square foot price. If a client has a wall where they want to make a statement and realizes it's 45 square feet, we have ways to go about it. We can use one stone to border the area, reducing the total square footage but achieving that same high-end impact. We could also use field tiles in a dynamic herringbone or basketweave pattern without the premium waterjet price.

ARE THERE CERTAIN ROOMS WHERE A BIGGER PORTION OF THE BUDGET IS WELL-SPENT?

Yes. We do a lot of new-home builds that come with an allowance. We know right away that the master bath will be a good chunk of the budget. This is where the homeowner is waking up every morning, so we feel it's one of the most important. We find clients also like to focus on the guest bath as well, especially in Shore homes—it's the one everyone is using when they visit and people want a wow factor for guests.

Then in other rooms, like the kids' bathroom, you might not opt for marble, but subway tiles on the walls are an excellent choice. Using that on walls can save a lot of money and then you could get fancier on the floors with an inlay or putting in a niche in the shower walls. There are ways to be creative.

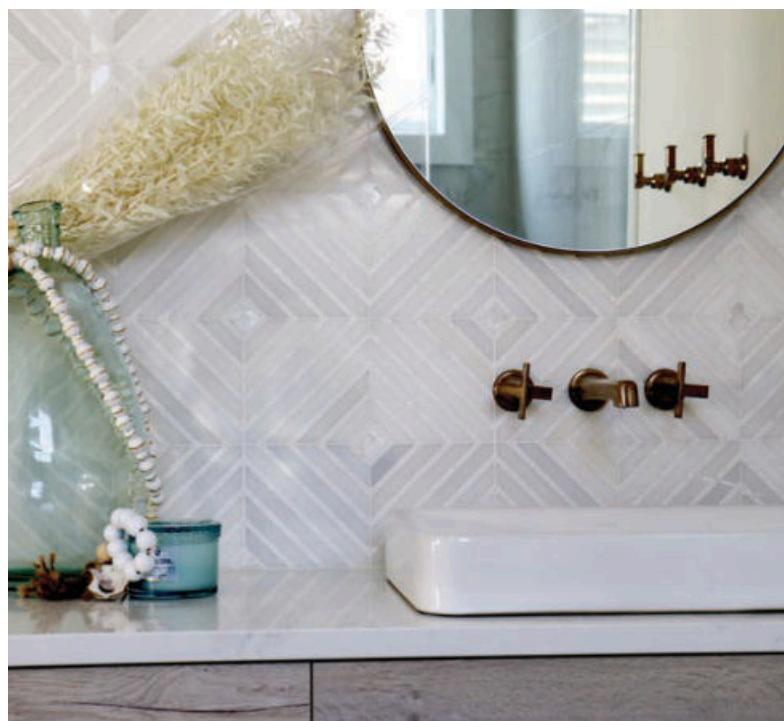
WHAT OTHER AREAS COULD TILE MAKE AN IMPACT?

There are a few areas we can tile that might be unexpected but can come out stunning. We've done

stair risers in decorative patterns, wine cellars with stone looks and even tiled the whole face of a kitchen island. You could go all-out on a bar backsplash with lighting and shelves, adding to its entertainment value. Laundry rooms are another cool way to use your budget. It's likely the smallest square footage, so why not make it really sharp looking? These take a home to another level and show you put more thought into it. Everyone wants their home to have personality.

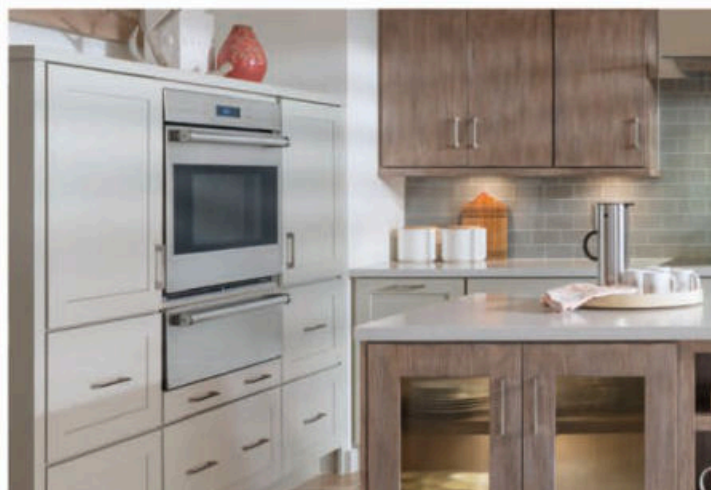
WHY SHOULD HOMEOWNERS CONSIDER COAST TILE FOR THEIR PROJECT?

We truly understand what goes into this process. Homeowners aren't walking into a place where we grab what's in stock off a pallet. We work hand-in-hand helping homeowners select materials and manage their budget. We're not a commission sales staff, and sometimes we will tell them if we should pull back in one area or spend the money in another space. We want you to have a beautiful home and get what makes you happy. **H&H**





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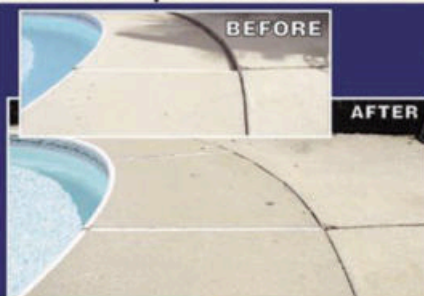
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"We have four core values: hospitality, dependability, competence and kindness," explains CEO Jason Mangone. "Our business is making members' lives easier by maintaining great relationships with them, our team and our network of subcontractors, and offering members a single point of contact to address any issue."

Mangone spoke with *House & Home* about why homeowners should trust investments like second homes to professionals they enjoy a strong relationship with—professionals who provide services ranging from home checks to basic maintenance to major renovations.

WHAT'S THE BENEFIT IN WORKING WITH C. ALEXANDER'S PREFERRED VENDORS?

Chris Alexander, the "C" of "C. Alexander" and who we bought the company from about a year ago, agreed to stay at least through the end of 2023. If there's one thing I've learned from him, it's that you need deep, genuine relationships with vendors you're letting into members' homes.

The Jersey Shore is a series of barrier islands. That means its networks of vendors usually serve one island, at most two, and tend to be relationship-driven. Because we have an ongoing presence in those communities, we interact with the best, most reliable vendors in any category in a particular market.

DO YOU HELP HOMEOWNERS FIND A VENDOR, OR DO YOU HANDLE THEIR EXISTING CONTRACTS?

We'll do either. It's your home, so if there's someone you're used to dealing with, that's your decision. But if you say, "Hey, just get my HVAC serviced and my toilet fixed," we'll figure that out for you.

WHAT'S THE ADVANTAGE OF WORKING WITH A PROFESSIONAL HOME-CARE SERVICE?

It boils down to having one person you call for everything, whether it's an HVAC, plumbing, pool or landscaping issue, or anything else. Member feedback always focuses on our relationship. We're paid to allow our members to relax in their home because they trust who cares for it. If they feel great about the relationship and they have a great service experience, then it means they're enjoying the home with their family. That's everything to us.

If we're calling our members, it's often not for a reason they want to hear (it's never good to find out the roof in your expensive home is leaking). But when you get off the phone with us, you should feel confident that there's a plan—and a relationship—in place to take care of that issue so it's not another thing on your plate. **H&H**

HOW DO YOU HELP HOMEOWNERS MANAGE THEIR SHORE HOUSES IN THE OFFSEASON?

We offer two things. One is peace of mind: For a membership fee, you get a weekly home inspection while you're not using your home. We

Jason Mangone,
CEO

watch and walk through your house, and we send you a report—with pictures—detailing any issues.

The second is convenience. We allow you to completely outsource the care of your second home. When I say we watch your home and do everything else, we literally do everything else, whether it's fixing a leaky faucet, securing a loose railing, servicing your HVAC, fixing a

plumbing issue, or if you want new bathrooms and a new kitchen, we can do all of that, too. Some work we fulfill in-house, some we subcontract out. One of the benefits of membership is a reduced rate on the management fee for any subcontractors we bring into your house.

We have a list of vendors we deal with in about 40 categories. A luxury homeowner at the Jersey Shore might deal with between 12 to 20 different service-providers for the basic upkeep of their home. What that means is a dozen bills, relationships and people to hold accountable; with us, rather than manage dozens of contractors, you build one long-term relationship.

The additional wrinkle in maintaining a second home is trusting who has the keys: It's easier for folks if it's someone they have a relationship with rather than someone with whom they only have a couple interactions per year.



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Shopping replacement windows can be a confusing and at times frustrating process but this partnership with Infinity Windows

from Marvin aims to simplify things for every homeowner. "Our consultants are here to help you break through the clutter and confusion so you can focus on the window solution that best fits your needs," Parnes says.

Because Global Home Improvement offers a full range of exterior home remodeling solutions such as metal roofing, James Hardie Siding and Infinity Windows from Marvin, they can handle your entire renovation from start to finish. "Every project is assigned a dedicated project manager and our in-home consultants are also there to help with accurate pricing, design and ideas without the high pressure tactics of other companies," he says.

If your home is due for exterior renovations, Parnes advises not to delay. "Planning your renovation ahead of time is always the way to go." **H&H**

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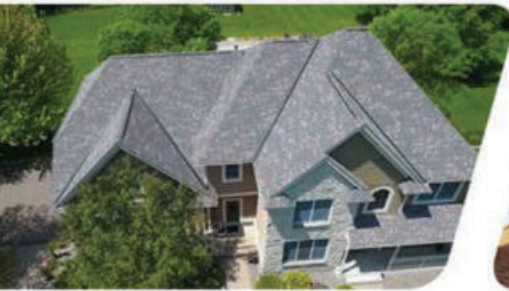
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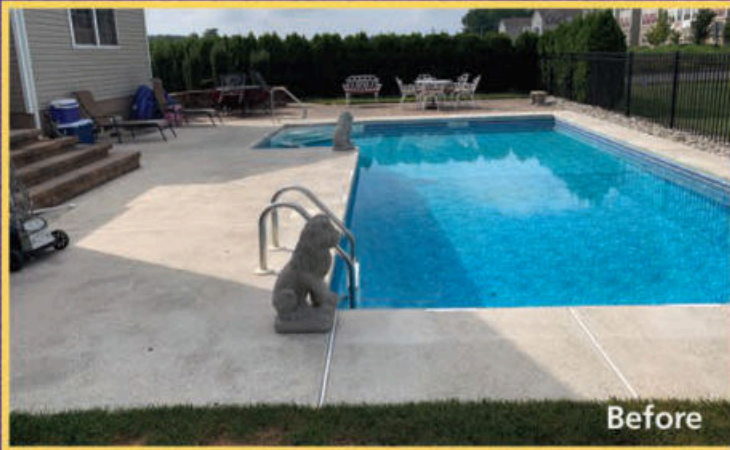
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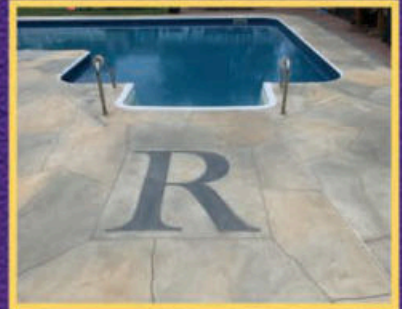
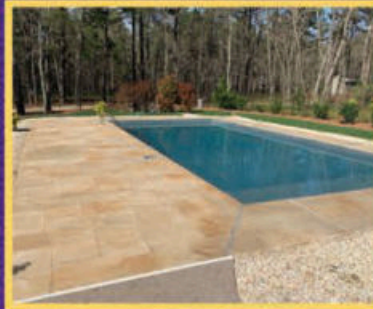
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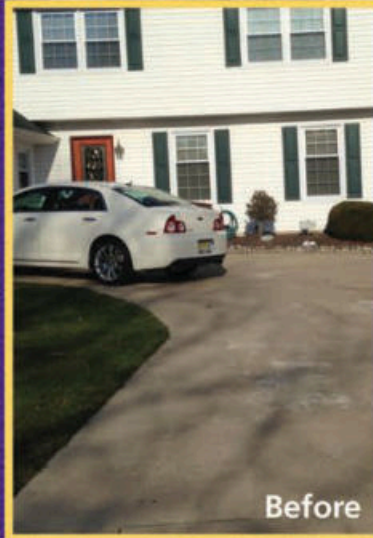
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KITCHENS AND BATHROOMS are the two most popular, as well as most expensive, rooms to remodel. With proper planning and guidance, these renovations can not only transform an existing space but also help homeowners boost the return on their investment.

BY KAREN NIMETZ

If you have recently fantasized about creating your own dream kitchen or bathroom, you are not alone. However, before you attempt to turn your dreams into reality, make sure to heed advice from experts in the industry to ensure a smoother process, from beginning to end, and avoid unexpected

pitfalls along the way.

Over the past year and a half, with so many people homebound, the desire to renovate kitchens and bathrooms was high on many homeowners' lists. Kitchens are often referred to as "the heart of the home" and rightfully so. Today, kitchens are used for so

much more than just cooking. Many kitchens have evolved more into a family gathering space, and for many families this past year, an office or classroom of sorts. And when it comes to room evolution, bathrooms are no different. These days many bathrooms have more of a spa-like feel with larger

Image above courtesy of Kitchen Magic. Image at right courtesy of HomeTech Renovations

showers, better lighting and greater amenities such as vanity mirrors with built-in televisions. It's no wonder that after spending so much time in these two rooms, homeowners have started to notice what their kitchens and bathrooms are lacking and how they can potentially look and function.

Proper planning and budgeting

"Before starting a substantial project like a kitchen or even a master bath, homeowners often think they can simply have a specialist look at the space, take measurements and immediately give a quote and a time frame, as they would to put a fence in the backyard or seal a driveway," says David Cerami, president of HomeTech Renovations. "However, there are often a lot of different moving parts to kitchen and bathroom remodels, like plumbing, electrical systems, new appliance integration, as well as modifications to the structure, such as soffits and partial wall removals or changing out flooring."

Cerami says it's important for homeowners to fully grasp the complexity of a kitchen or a bath project and urges those considering a remodel to either of these spaces to "speak with experienced, certified and accredited specialists that will guide them through the entire process and assist them not only on the design portion but the build integration as well."

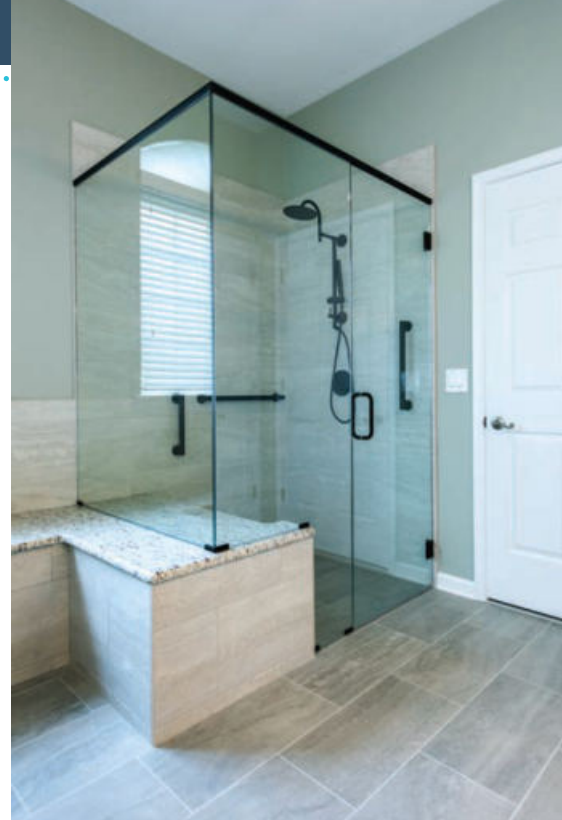
Another essential element involved in the planning stages is deciding on a realistic budget.

Sophia Amiano, of Amiano & Son Design-Build, notes, "A lot of homeowners feel wary about sharing their budget with their contractors, but this is the first thing you should do, believe it or not. Any professional firm will be respectful of a client's budget and depending on the scope of work and materials used for the renovation, work within that amount. If that is not feasible, a reliable and reasonable company should come up with alternative solutions to make your space work for your budget, whether that is to cut back on more costly materials or cutting back on some scope of work."

New trends in design

Design trends are continually evolving and changing so making the best design choices for your remodel should be based on necessity, durability and long-term appeal rather than what's fashionable in the moment.

This pandemic has had quite an impact on the latest trends in kitchens and bathrooms. In regard to kitchens, Linda Fennessy of Kitchen Magic says, "Homeowners were cooking more, having more impromptu meals and in much need of additional storage. The most requested items were pantries and islands



in addition to remodeling the rest of the kitchens. We suspect this had to do with being home and being in the kitchen more. They were taking a good, hard look at their kitchens and deciding that they would invest in their homes and quality of life."

The ease of cleaning and caring for countertops and cabinets has also affected trends over the last few years. Fennessy notes, "Quartz countertops are outpacing granite significantly. While both stones are beautiful, quartz is stronger and doesn't require any maintenance." She continues, "Maintenance-free, laminate cabinet doors have been superseding wood for a long time now. We believe that the laminate material is more conducive to the kitchen environment where heat and humidity have a negative impact on wood. No lemon oil needed and they clean up with just a wipe."

One bathroom remodel trend that has become more in vogue is swapping out shower-tub combos for freestanding tubs and/or separate glass-paneled showers. President of Glass Castle, Scott Kingsland, says not only have walk-in showers increased in popularity but, "the shower enclosures are getting larger and larger. Three years ago, to see a shower enclosure that was seven or eight feet wide was uncommon but now we see it quite often." He adds, "The frameless shower enclosure is by far the most requested item. Even though you're taking a lot of the footprint of the bathroom up with the shower enclosure being larger, the glass shower door allows for the bathroom to feel larger and it shows off



Image at right courtesy of Amiano & Son Design-Build

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all of the tile work.”

The ‘bigger is better’ philosophy doesn’t just pertain to showers. Kingsland says, “We are beginning to see a great deal of interest in larger frameless, beveled mirrors. For a while it was mostly small, framed, self-confined hanging mirrors, but bigger mirrors are definitely becoming increasingly popular.”

In the end

Not only will a kitchen or bathroom remodel provide a more updated look and more functional use of space, it can also add significant value to your home. While the return on investment (ROI) of kitchens can vary greatly, “bathroom remodels yield the biggest returns in terms of boosting your home’s resale value,” according to real estate listing company, Zillow.

However, before allowing the latest design trends and dreams of increased home value to fill your head with visions of grandeur, remember it is always wise to stay on track and on budget. Amiano advises asking yourself, “What works for you in your space now? More importantly, what does not work for you in your space now? Your design guides the project. Sometimes to create your perfect

space, it may require some rearranging or expansion, so be open to suggestions and ideas, as well as asking questions of your designer/contractor. How often do you do a home renovation? Make sure you do it right.” **H&H**



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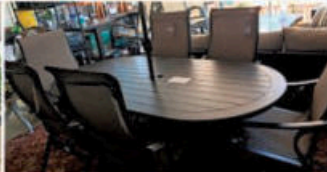
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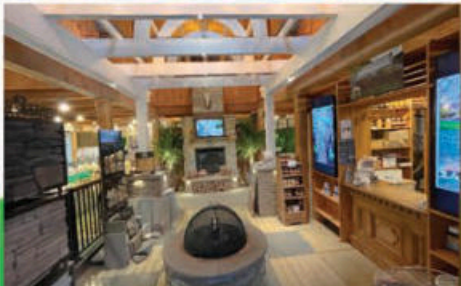
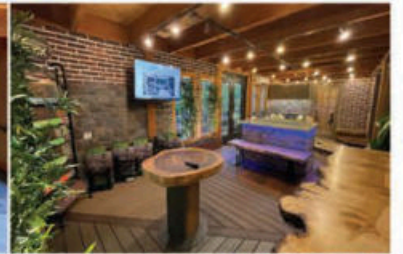
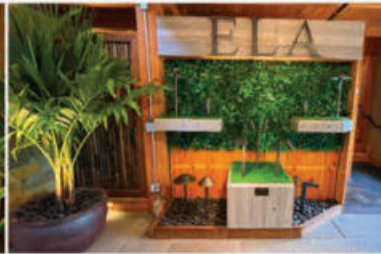
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Generating Peace of Mind

Colonial Generators helps homeowners and businesses eliminate the stress, inconvenience and cost associated with losing power. *by Lindsey Getz*

Almost every aspect of American life depends on uninterrupted power. When the power goes out, even for a short time, it can be incredibly inconvenient, unnerving and even dangerous.

For a young mother of twins in Delaware County, a power outage that lasted four days following a severe storm left her feeling helpless and stressed. At the time, her twin girls were only newborns. After that experience, she began looking into options for whole-home power generators. She felt fortunate to have found Colonial Generators. Having recently moved, she says she is planning to have Colonial install a home generator once again. She simply can-

not imagine living without one anymore.

"In the area that we previously lived, we lost power frequently—as often as two or three times each month, largely because of all the trees around us," says the homeowner, who asked to remain anonymous. "Even if it was just a few hours, it was hard with new babies. Heating formula or even just keeping the house warm were suddenly stressors I had to think about."

After having the home generator installed, the homeowner says she never even noticed when the power went out in her area. Backup power would kick on so quickly, so it seemed as though nothing had even happened.

That's exactly what a whole-home generator is meant to do, according to Nikos Papadopoulos, president of Colonial Generators. When a home loses power, an automatic transfer switch shifts immediately to the standby generator. Only a few seconds pass between the power going off and then kicking back on—like a "quick blip," Papadopoulos says.

Although Papadopoulos says the trend toward whole-home generators remains in its infancy—approximately 5% of homes have full backup power, he estimates—the need continues to increase. The COVID-19 pandemic, in which people spent more time than ever at home, has made this need quite clear. When unnerved homeowners were stuck home with no power, Colonial Generators received a significant uptick in calls and requests for price quotes.

"As people experienced power outages in the midst of being stuck at home during this pandemic, I think the need to have power at all times really emerged," Papadopoulos says.



Photography courtesy of Colonial Generators

“Homeowners were stocking up on food and had freezers full of meat. There was a lot to be lost if the power went out for too long.”

Likewise, generators have equipped many businesses with essential backup power. Local restaurants are a fine example. Restaurateurs who were already coping with razor-thin margins even prior to the pandemic certainly cannot afford to throw away any food due to power outages and other preventable disruptions.

With the need rising, Papadopoulos believes home generators will become an increasingly important part of America’s future. He equates it to the comforts of heating and air conditioning, once considered an indulgence that has become a necessity most people cannot imagine doing without.

“We believe in the not-too-distant future that whole-home generators are going to become a standard part of homeowners’ lifestyles,” he adds. “There are many different benefits to having backup power, and we all want to have life uninterrupted. With people at home more than ever, the need will only grow.”

Of course, he suggests homeowners should carefully vet providers when selecting a professional to install and maintain their generator.



With the “newness” surrounding this market, some inexperienced providers have jumped into the fray. The benefit to choosing a provider such as Colonial Generators is that the company focuses solely on generators.

Worth the Investment

Colonial Generators has the specialized expertise needed to sell, install and service generators for homes and businesses. Papadopoulos considers this an important point, adding that no one can afford to be left

“in limbo” if something goes wrong and no one is available to fix the problem.

“For some people, especially the elderly or those with medical needs, losing power is more than an inconvenience,” he says. “For some, losing power can be really serious. It’s important you get a whole-home generator from a reputable company that can also service their work.”

To his point, the decision often comes down to peace of mind. Going without power for any amount of time can be frustrating. And for the young Delaware County mother referenced earlier in this story, having babies at home without power has the potential to cause unwanted stress. Now, she considers a whole-house generator nothing less than a necessity.

“It’s an investment, but it’s worth it,” she says. “While they have small generators that you can buy yourself and will give you some power, once you’ve experienced whole-house power like this, it’s really hard to imagine living without it.”

Papadopoulos says he’s thrilled to be able to make this service available to homeowners and business owners. Also, because Colonial Generators offers financing plans, whole-home generators are more affordable than ever.

“As an owner, I’m just really excited about what whole-home generators can do for people,” he adds. “It’s a solution for homeowners who not only want to avoid inconveniences to their lifestyle but who want to have comfort knowing that they won’t lose food or heat or even medical supplies or baby formula that needs refrigeration.

“This is a solution that will give people peace of mind,” he continues. “And for many, that’s invaluable.” **H&H**



“This is a solution that will give people peace of mind. And for many, that’s invaluable.”

—Nikos Papadopoulos,
president of Colonial Generators

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Pandemic Projects

The home improvement industry experienced a boom like never before as more people stayed in throughout the pandemic. Professionals were busy sprucing up spaces for all sorts of uses, and here are just a few of their memorable projects.

EDITED BY AMY KODRICH



Backyard Oasis

Back in 2020, we had the honor of starting a project for one of our incredible clients. This build consists of a very large covered porch with enough room for a seating area, fireplace and dining table, complete with exterior lighting and a ceiling fan. We left a portion of the porch uncovered for sunbathing. The whole project overlooks their beautiful pool and is a great addition to their home. The homeowners are thrilled with how it turned out, and we are incredibly proud of this project.

Shyla Dempsey, showroom manager, First State Building & Design
Chadds Ford, Pa., (302) 246-7464, FSBD.co



Shore Escape

As the pandemic continued to change our lives more and more every day, finding an escape from the stress and craziness of it all became more important. Heading down the Shore proved itself to be an excellent outlet for finding peace and joy. This project was meant to bring out playful colorways and a style that captured the elegance of the Jersey Shore. The shape of the scallop tile and the vibrant high variation colorway create the perfect combination of elegant and beachy. The gold accents and subtle subway tile tie together the entire vision. This bathroom encompasses all that we hope for in an escape from the chaos of today's world. As you walk into this bathroom, you know that you are at the Shore, away from all the stress and you can simply smile and appreciate the carefully curated design.

Kyle E. Eisele, design consultant
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Guest Bathroom Remodel

An empty nest couple that frequently enjoys traveling to nice places, like all of us, were trapped in their own house. They asked us to remodel their guest bathroom to be a 'spa-like resort' within their house.

They asked us to remodel their guest bathroom to be a 'spa-like resort' within their house. Natural light from the windows and sky light flood the entire room, including the shower because the vanity wall was kept down 12 inches from the ceiling. There is a deep soaking tub for long relaxing baths and a generously large shower with zero-threshold entry without a door for long comfortable showers. A heated mirror with LED lights won't fog with steam from the long showers. Heated floor tile and ceiling-mounted heat lamps keep the temperature just right year-round. They may no longer want to leave their house.



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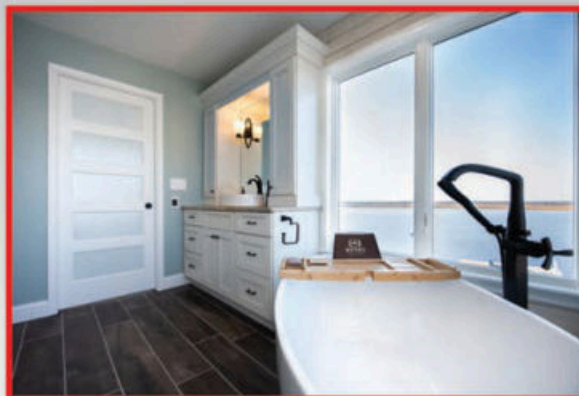
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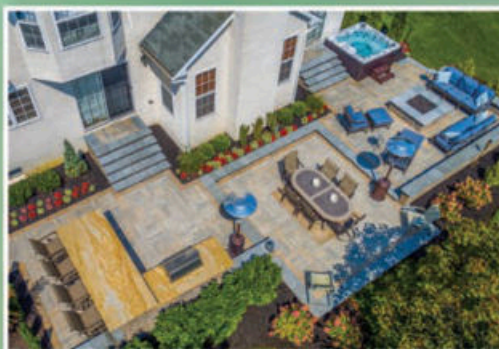
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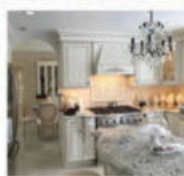


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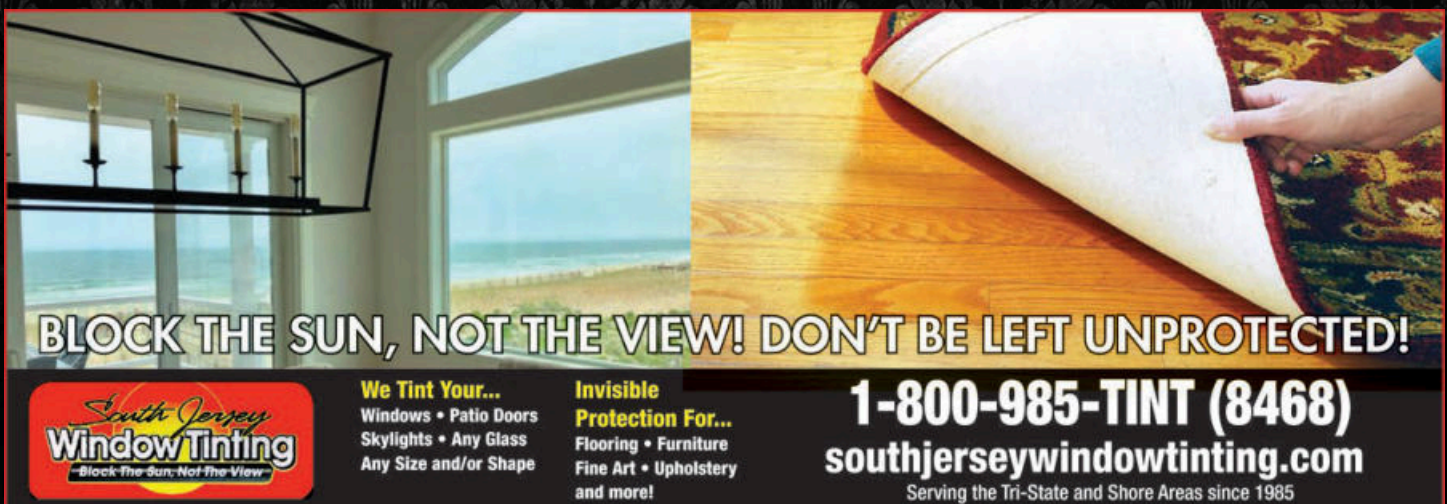
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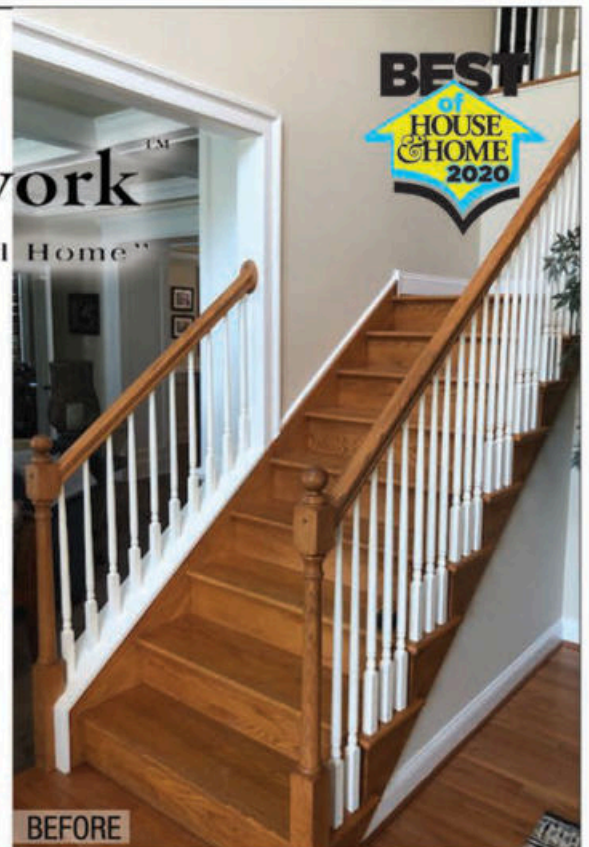
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